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CANNING LOBSTERS.

(From "The Preservation of Fishery Products for Food," by C. H. Stevenson, in the Bulletin of the U. S. Fish Commission for 1898, page 522.)

The lobsters are first boiled in a large vat or kettle about 20 minutes, after which they are heaped on large tables, usually with the backs up, care being taken to have the bodies more or less straightened out. The boiling is frequently done in the afternoon, in order that the lobsters may have sufficient time to cool during the night. The next morning certain men, designated as "breakers," break off the claws and tails from the bodies, throwing the latter with the refuse, for the reason that, though the carapax contains some good meat, it is difficult to extract and clean it. The sweetbreads, however, are generally saved. The claws are then split by the "crackers," using a small hatchet or cleaver, which opens them so that the meat can be readily taken out. Formerly the tail was split in a similar manner to the claws, but at present the meat is punched out from the tail by means of a small "thole" pin, or other suitable pointed implement. The meat is next thoroughly washed in water, the tin cans filled and weighed to insure uniformity, and then covered and cleaned, after which they go to the sealers, who solder the covers down. Next comes the bathing, the most difficult part of the process. The cans are immersed in boiling water for about an hour, when they are taken out and "vented," a small hole being punched in the cover to release the air, after which they are sealed again and boiled for 2 hours longer. They are afterwards allowed to cool, tested to insure their being tight, and then scoured, painted, and labeled. If the cans are boiled in a retort, say at a steam pressure of 15 pounds to the square inch, which is equivalent to 250° F., the time of boiling is reduced about one-half.